

Mayor's State of the City Address

Mayor William R. "Rusty" Bailey, III
Riverside, California

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As I prepared for this speech I met with residents, friends, students, councilmembers and staff. Throughout these conversations I was reminded that Riverside is truly a unique city. We have our own style here. I call it, the Riverside Way.

The Riverside Way is collaborative – through friendships and partnerships created and cultivated within the city, as well as beyond our boundaries – Riversiders have always found innovative solutions to problems, and we continue to make long-term decisions that endure for generations. We are better, TOGETHER, in Riverside.

The Riverside Way is welcoming – from migrant farmers to the military, from entrepreneurs to college students – we welcome people to our city and make them feel at ease, and at home. Opportunities for new residents of Riverside to plug and play, whether through the many chambers of commerce, places of worship, service clubs, non-profit boards or city commissions – old Riverside accepts new Riverside like no other city. We are inviting and accommodating in Riverside.

The Riverside Way is relational. Conversations and Relationships are ongoing processes toward continual improvement and growth. And that is how you ALL can support the Riverside Way in your daily walk; through meaningful conversations that cultivate relationships, and later on, down the road, bear fruit.

How are you building bridges and relationships through conversations, in our city, today?

Through my conversations on the State of our City, I discovered this: The State of our City is responsive and responsible, dynamic and sustainable, inclusive and intelligent.

These are the words that I believe best exemplify and describe our city.

Last month, I was sworn in as our city's 17th Mayor. As we start the New Year, this is a great time to share with you my vision for Riverside. In my swearing in speech I identified three themes that I will continue to reference during my term of office: Gratitude, Leadership Philosophy, and Challenge.

I am grateful to live in a free country that allows us to give spiritual thanks, on a daily basis, to whomever we, as individuals, believe in. I am grateful for our city's prosperity – relative to other cities around the world.

We are blessed to live the good life in Riverside.

Thank you to my beautiful wife, Judy, the MVP of Team Bailey and the CEO of our family - for your unwavering support of my dreams and my purpose. "I love you, Judy." Thank you to my inspiring daughters, Elizabeth and Julia, for sharing your daddy with this city. To my brothers and sisters, and to the best mom and dad a mayor could ask for; thanks for preparing me for the challenges and opportunities that life has brought, and will no doubt continue to bring my way.

A special shout out to my students - who inspired me to run for office, and who believed in me when others doubted.

Thanks to the Chamber for hosting the state of the city address, especially this one, my first, and the first held in the Soldiers' Memorial and Municipal Auditorium. To Cindy Roth and Brian Hawley, thanks for your leadership and advocacy on behalf of businesses in Riverside. You are building lasting bridges toward our future success as a city, and a region, in this global marketplace.

Enormous thanks goes to my colleagues on the City Council, and previous councils - for the Riverside Renaissance, the most ambitious capital improvement plan in the city's history. The Renaissance touched every ward and every neighborhood, and proved that the city cares about all of our residents.

And a hearty welcome back to public service to Ken Gutierrez, now Ward 3 Councilman – for answering the call, and stepping in as a steward, to represent the "hub of the city."

This year is an opportunity for the public to select their representative in Wards 2, 3, 4 and 6. I challenge the candidates to be civil and relevant in their campaigning. And I challenge the voters to become informed about the issues and the candidates.

To the City Manager and city staff: I have tremendous faith and confidence in Scott Barber's ability to lead the city team and manage our billion dollar budget. Scott has shown solid decision making skills – hiring the right people, for the right job, at the right time. Well done Scott! Welcome Al Zelinka, our new Community Development Director and Larry Vaupel, our Office of Economic Development Manager. We expect great things from you all.

Thank you to our City Attorney and City Clerk who lead their respective professional organizations – Colleen Nicol is the immediate past president of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, and Greg Priamos is the future president of the City Attorneys' Department of the League of California Cities. Riverside is proud of your professionalism and leadership, both within and outside of our city.

As for my staff, I'm excited to work with Maureen Kane, returning to City Hall in a new role, and thankful to Lalit Acharya, Darlene Elliot, and Jetta Hice who continue to serve the Mayor's Office. I've rounded out my staff with Josephine Erickson, my first campaign manager at Gage Middle School, and Felina Rosales, a UCR graduate exploring her talents at City Hall. Thank you to Steve Frasher, who continues the important work on Completion Counts from the Mayor's Office

And finally, thank you, Mayor Loveridge – for setting the bar so high for elected officials in general, and more specifically, for Riverside's Mayor. Kudos to your career in public service, some 33 years, serving neighborhoods, wards, cities and most importantly - Riverside.

As you may have heard before, my philosophy of leadership is two-fold: Lead by Example and Take Care of Your Troops. I believe we are all capable of being leaders – of your families, in your neighborhoods, at your workplace. And we all have the capacity to serve others. Integrity, Vision, Courage, and Passion are leadership characteristics that motivate me daily. And it is my mission that these will be the characteristics that define Riverside's leadership, and for which Riverside will be known throughout our region, this state, our country, and the world.

If we all share the philosophy of a servant leader, imagine what we can accomplish, working together, in public, and private enterprise. To be a great leader, sometimes you need to be a follower. And you shouldn't worry about who gets the credit. But first, you must BELIEVE that YOU have the power to Seize your Destiny!

To believe in something, you must understand it, and then make a commitment to see it through. During my first year as mayor I commit to continuing "Mayor's Night Out," "Walk with the Mayor," and the "Education Roundtable." I will create a "Bike with the Mayor program," visit at least one school and one business per week, spend time with each councilmember in their ward, and ride along with city staff in all the departments. And I will create a "Business Roundtable" to share strategies and formulate policies to expand economic and workforce development.

My commitment as your Mayor is to continue building bridges and cultivating relationships; to continue deepening our historic roots, maintaining the momentum of the Renaissance, and promoting the Riverside Way.

In an era of national fiscal cliffs, and state fiscal walls, the road ahead is not without challenges. Decisions by the state and federal governments may continue to negatively impact our city's budget. By committing to the Riverside Way, we will develop strategies to build a stronger local economy in order to create local jobs for our residents.

My challenge to YOU is to believe in the RIVERSIDE WAY, and to commit to making yourself available in 2013 – available to serve your family, your neighborhood, and your city.

How do we achieve this? By working together to build upon the four pillars of our strategic plan, by Seizing our Destiny.

The first Pillar of Seizing Our Destiny is being a Catalyst for Innovation:

We are a Catalyst for Innovation in medical science, education and entrepreneurship!

The School of Medicine must remain a top priority. It is critical to our city and this region's healthcare, and an economic engine for our city at the right time. Thank you to Chancellor Timothy White, Dean Richard Olds and the School of Medicine staff, for your unwavering commitment through the accreditation process – a well-deserved victory for you and our community.

Working together we will improve health care access and outcomes in our region. Well done Citizens University Committee in advocating far-and-wide, and thank you County Supervisors for your financial commitment to making the medical school a reality.

We will continue to fight for the necessary funding to provide program stability and continuity with the support of Congressman Mark Takano, Senator Richard Roth and Assembly members Jose Medina and Eric Linder. Riverside is counting on your leadership to propel the school of medicine forward.

Downtown's destiny must include a footprint of the school of medicine on the Community Hospital Campus as it grows over the next 5 years. New business opportunities will emerge to support this growing industry. Together, with our hospitals, CBU's Allied Health School, La Sierra University's Pre-Health Professionals Program, RCC's state of the art nursing school facilities, and UCR's School of Medicine, Riverside will be the capital of the medical industry in inland southern California.

Educating our youth is paramount to a thriving city. This is the final year of the Gates Foundation grant that created Completion Counts, Riverside's partnership with RCC to raise college attendance and graduation rates. With the encouragement and support of the Chamber, both Alvord and Riverside Unified School Districts have increased their academic rigor at all levels, promoting core classes known as A-G requirements, which are necessary for our students to gain admission to UC and CSU schools.

Most importantly, Completion Counts announced last May that the RCC Guarantee will ensure that qualified students from all of our public high schools can finish their associate's degree or certificate in two years-time. The first group of more than 300 students is working its way through their courses at RCC right now.

While the Gates' grant brought the education community together in Riverside, Seizing Our Destiny's Education Roundtable will continue the momentum in maintaining a "college-going culture." This will ensure that Riverside's workforce will be stronger, and Riverside's economy will benefit from these efforts.

We must foster entrepreneurship in our city. I challenge the City Manager to find a way to open an Innovation Center on Main Street...supporting local entrepreneurs and start-ups. Small business is the backbone of our city's economy.

I will spearhead the creation of the Riverside Entrepreneurial Academy. Working with the Deans of the Schools of Business and Engineering at our 4 institutions of higher learning, we will create an entrepreneurial academy so 50 of our most promising high school students will root themselves in Riverside upon graduation. We need to grow our own entrepreneurs in Riverside, and let them know that they are supported here – which will encourage them to start, and expand their businesses, in their home town. This, is the Riverside Way!

As we cultivate business in our city, we must do so with our future generations in mind and strive to be a Clean and Green, Sustainable community. This goal will attract even more creative leaders, and our city will benefit from their talent dividend. With over 100,000 Riversiders under the age of 21, we can never forget that the youth today, will be our doctors, engineers, software designers, teachers, and public servants of tomorrow. We will prepare them to lead. That is the Riverside Way!

We are an international city. Through a highly competitive process, Riverside was voted the #1 Intelligent Community in the world in 2012; the last US city to garner this award was New York City, in 2001. Not bad company.

In February, Tohoku University, from our oldest sister city in Sendai, Japan, will open an office at UCR. This office will support 150 students that Tohoku will send each year, for the next five years, toward service-learning in Riverside. This is the type of promise that must be pursued with each sister-city. We must continue to work toward multiplying the economic impacts from these important relationships.

This summer, I am committed to travel with 25 of our high school students to Erlangen, Germany, our newest sister city. This is the third year of the Riverside-Erlangen high school exchange. During my visit, I will look for ways to bring businesses currently growing in Erlangen's high tech incubators, to Riverside; as well as build bridges with their innovative corporations such as Siemens and the Fraunhofer Institute, the creator of the MP3.

The concept of Riverside's Long Night of Arts and Innovation – so successful in its premier last year - was brought back from our first trip to Erlangen. Showcasing the best of Riverside's arts and artists, science and scientists, innovations and innovators; this exceptional event, along with the Mayor's Ball, will make Arts and Innovation Week a Signature Event for our region.

As a result of our sister city relationships, Solar Max, using Chinese investment, chose to relocate its Headquarters to Riverside. They have restored and adaptively reused the historic FMC building, and they plan to create 1600 green jobs while boosting Riverside's solar energy profile. This is the type of international economic development the city will attract, develop and retain. Another great example of the Riverside Way!

It's no wonder that Sister Cities International has recognized Riverside's program as a "Best in Class." This is a legacy we will build upon, working with Riverside's business, education, non-profit and faith communities. And we look forward to celebrating the International Relations Council's 50th anniversary in 2013, as they continue to nurture the culturally diverse relationships with Riverside's eight sister cities.

The SECOND Pillar of Seizing Our Destiny is Intelligent Growth:

From Business First to Business Ready, Riverside's land use future is tied to sustainable principles, efficient government processes, like ProjectDox, and Smart Zoning Codes.

Development must be focused on sites with opportunity to grow into their highest and best use – such as on our college campuses, in our business parks and around corporate headquarters. Business sites should be located near transportation infrastructure in order to more efficiently move goods and people to their desired destinations. Focus will remain on building grade separations and quiet zones to ensure efficient and safe movement of goods and people, while respecting our residents' quality of life in their neighborhoods.

Riverside's Transportation Future will begin this year with strategic planning and grant-writing to fund the layout and rollout of a street car network, and economic development project that will connect downtown Riverside with our universities, hospitals, neighborhoods, and retail hubs.

City staff will collaborate with Cal Trans, the Western Riverside Council of Governments, the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Riverside Transit Agency to create this 21st Century Transportation Network for Riverside.

Street Cars bring back some long lost heritage in this region, while offering the benefits of reducing our carbon footprint. Once again, the Riverside Way!

The Third Pillar is Location of Choice:

It is time to tell our story – to tell the story of the Riverside Way. It is time for us to ensure that the Riverside we know and love, becomes the Riverside that everyone knows and loves!

We should all be able to answer the question of Why Riverside? We must be able to tell others why we moved to Riverside, why we go to school in Riverside, why we live or work in Riverside, and why we think Riverside is the best place to raise a family. By telling our story, and inviting our out-of-town friends and business associates to experience Riverside, we will attract outside investors, who are looking for a city that shares their same entrepreneurial spirit. And we will roll out the red carpet to visitors who are looking to experience a new side of classic California. We are a location and destination of choice [pause] a city of choice, in southern California.

I challenge you to spend an afternoon visiting one of our 51 beautiful parks, 14 recreation facilities, or 7 branch libraries, like Orange Terrace – it has them all. Or check out some books at the newly refurbished Marcy Branch and Arlanza Branch libraries. They were built, for you!

Or hike up the hill at Doty Trust Park in La Sierra, which has one of the most beautiful views of downtown Riverside. And don't forget our Wilderness Park in Sycamore Canyon where the US Cup of Mountain Biking will race for its third year in a row. Alternatively, you students up there in the balcony, go enjoy the original skate park in Hunt Park, one of my favorite city amenities.

News Flash! This Saturday morning at 9 am, I invite you all to dust off your beach cruisers and bikes, and join me on the first “Bike with the Mayor” event, rain or shine. We'll start at Martha McLean/Anza Narrows Park, cruise down the Santa Ana River Trail to Fairmount Park, and stop for some coffee and conversation along the way. I look forward to being with you, listening to you, and learning from you, all while enjoying the great outdoors and some of the best open space that Riverside has to offer.

A healthy city provides its residents with ample opportunities to work, play, and shop. The Renaissance has gone a long way in providing these opportunities, advancing the quality of Riverside's parks, libraries, museums, community centers and events.

As the Fox Performing Arts Center enters its 4th season, it continues to expand its performances and theatrical selections. More entertainment diversity will appear later this year with the opening of the Fox Entertainment Plaza, Black Box Theater and Exhibit Hall. And it is exciting to watch the transformation of the Riverside Convention Center into a modern venue that will blend seamlessly into our historic downtown. Riverside is the center of Arts and Entertainment in Inland Southern California.

The city continues to invest in our cultural resources, with the Metropolitan Museum, focusing more attention on the historic Harada House as we develop a plan to ensure its significance in local and national history.

And the council remains steadfast in its priority to rehabilitate and refurbish our Main Library. In the next few months, staff will bring forward the final conceptual rendition, environmental documents and funding options.

As the county seat, Riverside is the hub for emergency services in this region. Our state of the art emergency operations center allows us to communicate across agencies, and organize responses to disasters of all types. In the near future, the city will invest in a new water quality control plant, otherwise known as the sewer treatment facility; and upgrade our water and electric infrastructure. The modernization of these facilities will help us protect our citizenry and ensure utility system reliability for businesses, residents, hospitals and governments, across the entire county.

Because of all these investments in the long-term health and quality of life in our city and for this region, Riverside remains a location of choice in southern California.

The Fourth and Final Pillar of Seizing Our Destiny is being a Unified City:

As we expand our minds through our cultural resources, we must not forget to keep our bodies strong. So I challenge our city to unite, and be a part, of the Fit, Fresh and Fun campaign. Riverside is Getting Healthy Together, through a community and social movement to change habits and move the needle for people who are overweight, have diabetes, or other physical ailments. A healthy body needs to Live Right, Move Right, and Eat Right.

In partnership with the Community Health Foundation, the City of Riverside supports a healthy environment by encouraging residents to seek Fit, Fresh, and Fun alternatives for a healthy lifestyle. Go to fitfreshfunriverside.com to find out who, what, when and where you can go, for free or discounted resources, that will help you, your friends and your families live a more fit, and fulfilling life.

In this spirit of selflessness, I ask all Riversiders to consider how they can reach out to help others in need across our community.

We are better together in Riverside. United by location, the Riverside Neighborhood Partnership helps keep our neighborhoods safe, active and beautiful, for our residents.

Together, public-private partnerships like the Andulka Park Tennis Center and the Riverside Aquatics Complex, attract and keep talented local athletes in our city. With mutual purpose, faith-based coalitions like Today's Urban Renewal Network, and The Ending Homelessness Foundation are working tirelessly to assist Riverside's most needy populations.

So how can you help? What good can you initiate? What cause can you join? How can you advance Riverside toward seizing our destiny?

In conclusion, I want to thank you all for joining me here tonight, for taking time out of your busy schedules to be a part of Riverside and its future. I am both humbled and emboldened by your friendship and support.

I hope you will visit me at city hall, where my door is open to you. I stand ready to assist you as you set forth to seize your destiny, whether it be in your neighborhood, your school, your place of worship, or your business.

I leave you with one final question and challenge: What is your destiny in Riverside? This is your city, this is your moment. Whatever your destiny is, let's achieve it together. After all, that is the Riverside Way!

May God bless you all and may God bless the great city of Riverside!

William R. "Rusty" Bailey, III
Mayor of Riverside

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